
MANHATTAN DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL

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WORKFORCE ISSUES

Presented by Joseph Perez
Self-Advocate
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Hello, my name is Joseph Perez. I am a self-advocate and I am here today to talk about supporting our direct support professionals. These are special people that want to be working with us. We're like family to them and vice versa, and they go through a lot of stuff with us. We don't want to lose them to other jobs.

When we lose staff we get upset and don't want to talk, and then we have to start all over again with new staff. The turnover is so bad and it shouldn't be that way. We put so much time into training them and building relationships with them, but they only make a little bit of money so they have to get extra jobs so they can feed their kids because we don't pay them enough. People need to have time off to regenerate their batteries and rest their eyes so they can do their jobs well, but a lot of our DSP's have to work two or three jobs just to pay the bills. Then sometimes they're too tired to do their work and get burned out, and they leave to find jobs that pay better.

It gets harder and harder to fill these jobs, and then we don't have enough staff. In my house we're supposed to have three staff but we only have two and it puts limits on my life. I was supposed to go to a meeting the other day but I couldn't because the staff had to stay with the other two individuals. I couldn't do my job because we didn't have enough staff. This is unacceptable. We have to make sure they get more money because they help us out a lot. We have to fight for what they need.